M1

133 16. The principal rivers, which joined together form the Caroní, are: Akaruai, Apanhuao, Yuruaní, Kukenan, Surukún, Uaiparú, and Tiriká.

There is besides a small strip of land which spills its waters toward the Karumán or Karmuarán River (British Guiana).

The abundance of water is one of the characteristics of the Gran Sabana; and even more is the hydraulic force, also metaphorically called "white coal," since all the rivers rush toward the Caroní in innumerable waterfalls or cataracts, the mere listing of which would fill several pages.

[137] 17. The Gran Sabana owes its name to a predominance in the region of natural fields of straw, which grows in shocks; but it especially owes its name to a contrast with the forest of British Guiana and the other bordering regions of Kuyuni, Paragua, etc. But let it not be assumed that this entire district is a single uniformly level highland like the Venezuelan llanos or the Argentinian pampas; quite the contrary, this is an extremely cut-up region, with innumerable hills, ridges, valleys, rivers, streams, and arroyos.

18. From the hydrographic point-of-view, it would be much more exact to call these lands "Upper Caroní," as the authors of the Taurepán-Spanish Catechism did; since in truth all the rivers flow toward the Caroní basin.

19. Inversely, from the orographic point-of-view, it would be more exact, expressive, and correct to call this region "Guiana Ridge," as the noted historian Caulín did when he wrote: "In this Ridge, which gives rise to the rivers of its coast, and runs toward the headwaters of the Suriñama River, dwell different tribes of Infantile Indians... These are Zapara, Macusi, Toruma, Cariguana, Aturayo, and Guacavayo.... Ridge that the Indians call Tumukurake..., and it carries along with it the rivers Amu, Maseruni, Cuyuni, and Apamoni"... (H. N. A., ed. Caracas, 1935, p. 221).

103 The Indians themselves in their language call this region "Uek-tá," which means "place or land of hills," in

/1 cont./

103 contraposition with "Remono-tá," "land of fields or level savannas," a name by which they know the bordering region of the Branco River in the neighboring republic of Brazil.

135 20. I believe that the wealth, both present and potential, of the Gran Sabana has been spoken and written about with evident exaggeration. (I am not here speaking, naturally, about mineral wealth nor that of the subsoil, obscure, problematical, and /8/ almost never with real positive results for the region wherein they are found.)

●137 Possibilities for farming and grazing cannot be said to be optimal; and there even exist substantial areas which are wasteland or have very sparse vegetation.

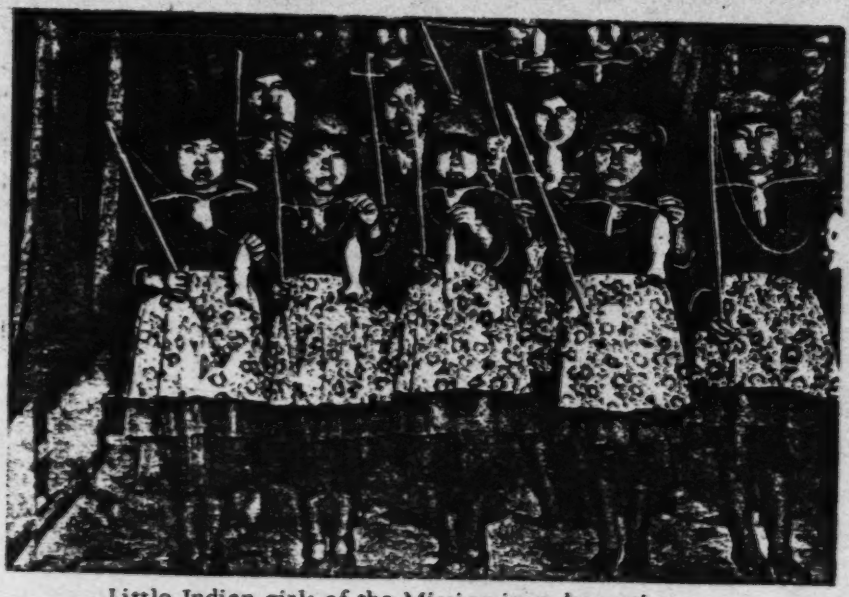
133 21. Nonetheless there is a great present and positive wealth in the Gran Sabana, which has been taken advantage of by the Pemón Indians for centuries and that we can share in should we go there, our lungs filled, our hands full, our eyes struck by emotion; it is the moderate climate, the inexhaustible watercourses, and the beauties of enchanting landscapes.

Those who may have had the fortune to visit this region will not find exaggerated these verses from one of the rhymes of our native children of the Mission of Santa Elena, "Viva the Nation -- and viva, viva the Sabana, -- which is the best of Guiana."

This is a beautiful region, certainly the most beautiful of all Guiana: beautiful in its indescribable landscapes, in the almost artificial profile of its mountains, in its valleys and rises, in its moriche palm groves swaying in the breeze, in its countless streamlets of pure and crystalline water, and, above all, in its immense waterfalls touched with rainbow hues.

133 The Pemón Indians sing of these beauties while enjoying
538 them, in their dance songs, in their tales and legends, only lacking the pen to come to copy them and printing to make them take flight on paper wings.

2:Armellada--42a M-5 (1933-1945) 1946 SS16 Pemon SS16



291
797
142
516
302

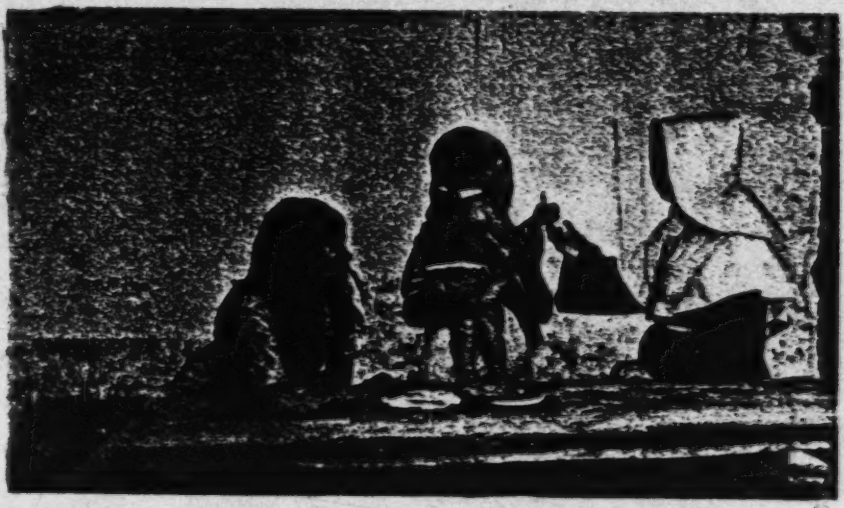
Little Indian girls of the Mission in a dramatic performance.

133
137

One of the many rivers which run through the Gran Sabana and a beautiful grove of moriche palms.

2:Armellada--74b M-5 (1933-1945) 1946 SS16 Pemon SS16

797
302
291
854
516



Native mothers with their children receiving gifts from a missionary sister.

133
137

This great stone mass and these woods tell us of the secrets enclosed in the Gran Sabana.

2:Armellada--74c M-5 (1933-1945) 1946 SS16 Pemon SS16

854
352
142
291
302

A cute little Indian child in a guayare.

133
●137

Central mountain ridges of the Gran Sabana, covered with a beautiful moriche palm grove.

2:Armellada--85a M-5 (1933-1945) 1946 SS16 Pemon SS16

133
● 137

Beautiful views of plain, mountain, and sky in the Gran Sabana.

• 137

The Gran Sabana, an area of luxurious vegetation and of the finest fruits, as is shown by the example you have before you.

101 cultural division of South America with the Guayana Area as its northern
171 part.

None of these cultural areas has any important characteristic that extends all over it with no variation at all, but each can be defined in a general way by certain common cultural elements. Thus the major division, the Amazon Area, includes Indians that live mainly on casave and "pepper-pot," that use tobacco, that use blow-guns and poisoned darts, that poison streams to obtain fish, that build semi-permanent houses and sleep in hammocks, that originally wore no clothing or only simple pubic-coverings, that anciently practiced the couvade, that have a purely shamanistic, animistic, and not priestly or theistic religious system, that make pottery, that travel by canoe, that use maraka-rattles, that bury the dead in foetal position, — and so on. The Kamarakotos have all these characters, in some of their numerous variations, as will be shown, but so do tribes as far away as southern Brazil, so that such characters belong to the whole Amazon Area.

In the Guayana Area, in addition to these characters or as typical local forms of them, most or all of the Indians raise and spin cotton and make complicated cotton fabrics, squeeze casave in a basketwork press of characteristic range of design, make numerous other fine and typical examples of basketry, smoke tobacco in the form of cigars and do not use coca, live in individual family groups and not in larger community houses and groups, are polygamous, use grave rather than urn burial, etc. It will be shown that the Kamarakotos are also typical Guayana Indians in all these respects.

Within the Guayana Area, the local culture groups are characterized less by these broad traits than by particular variations of them. Thus virtually all make baskets, but certain types of baskets characterize a group of tribes in a nuclear position in southeastern Venezuela and western British Guiana, and within these tribes certain types are Arekuna, as opposed to Makuchi, etc., and within the Arekumas certain ones are Kamarakoto as opposed to Taurepán. These manifold details will mostly be mentioned in the course of the following pages. It is also characteristic that the broader culture areas, like the Amazon Area and its subdivision, the Guayana Area, are in general definable regardless of racial and linguistic affinities. Within any one subarea, local cultures generally follow rather clearly racial and linguistic lines. Thus, Venezuelan Caribs usually have some distinctions, not only physical and linguistic but also cultural, from Venezuelan Arawaks, even when the two are rather closely associated, although of course it is not impossible for a Carib tribe to be "Arawakized" or an Arawak tribe "Caribized." The Kamarakotos are as typically Carib in culture as in language.

101 One other factor in this local subdivision needs special mention in orient-
137 ing the Kamarakotos among the Indians of their region and of South America:
182 that of environment. The most important environmental character in this

101 132 182 particular region is that some tribes habitually live in forests while others habitually live in sabanas, grassy plains amid the forests. This distinction may accompany or induce definite cultural differences even between tribes that are 131 closely allied racially and linguistically. The Kamarakotos, like the Taure- 133 panes, are sabana Indians.[1] They live in sabanas in the midst of surrounding forests, in a series of valley bottoms about 400 to 500 meters in elevation. They always live near but practically never in the forests and strongly prefer relatively flat valley bottoms, seldom penetrating into the mountains even temporarily. Until taken up by white explorers there is no memory or legend of any of them ever climbing Auyán-tepúi or any of the other real mountains 132 around their valleys. In these valleys frost is, of course, quite unknown and the days are always warm enough for clothes to be unnecessary for warmth but are seldom disagreeably hot. The nights are usually chilly and make sleeping indoors preferable. There is little seasonal variation of temperature, but there [22] are the usual well-defined rainy and dry seasons of the tropics. As in most of Venezuela, the rainy season is "winter," when there is little activity in travel, hunting, or agriculture, and the dry season is the active time.

121 178 [172] Recently subject, like all the Indians, to growing Venezuelan[2] influence, the Kamarakotos yet retain practically all the pre-Columbian culture of this area in readily recognizable and relatively unmodified form. This makes them an almost ideal group for study from this point of view and it also makes their study of much greater value than might appear from the small size of this one tribe. As a type study it is a concrete, unified, but broadly characteristic example of the sort of culture that once prevailed over most of Venezuela and that still prevails over an enormous area of that country. Such "civilized," "Venezuelan," or "European" influence as does appear in this tribe adds to, rather than subtracting from, its importance and interest. This influence lends itself to clear analysis and it also typifies a widespread process and one of the greatest social and economic importance.

114 Studies of this sort have been relatively so rare in Venezuela that an observer can be sure that almost anything he observes is important and worth publishing as long as it is accurately reported and intelligently interpreted. There has, it is true, been a long series of reports on Venezuelan Indians and certainly no depreciation of these studies is intended. Some of the early colonists and missionaries left very valuable accounts, irreplaceable because of their first-hand records of things now vanished. It goes without saying, however, that these were not unprejudiced or skilled observers and that their information was not gathered in a scientific way or integrated with anthropology in general, a science that hardly existed at that time. Other and ethnologically more accurate and sophisticated travelers, like Humboldt and Schomburgk, have since added many more and, on the whole, better data of the same sort. It is necessary to mention only the names of Cordero, Salas, Ernst, Tavera-

1 2 [see footnotes on p. 305, category 116 – Analyst]

103
133
137
311
361

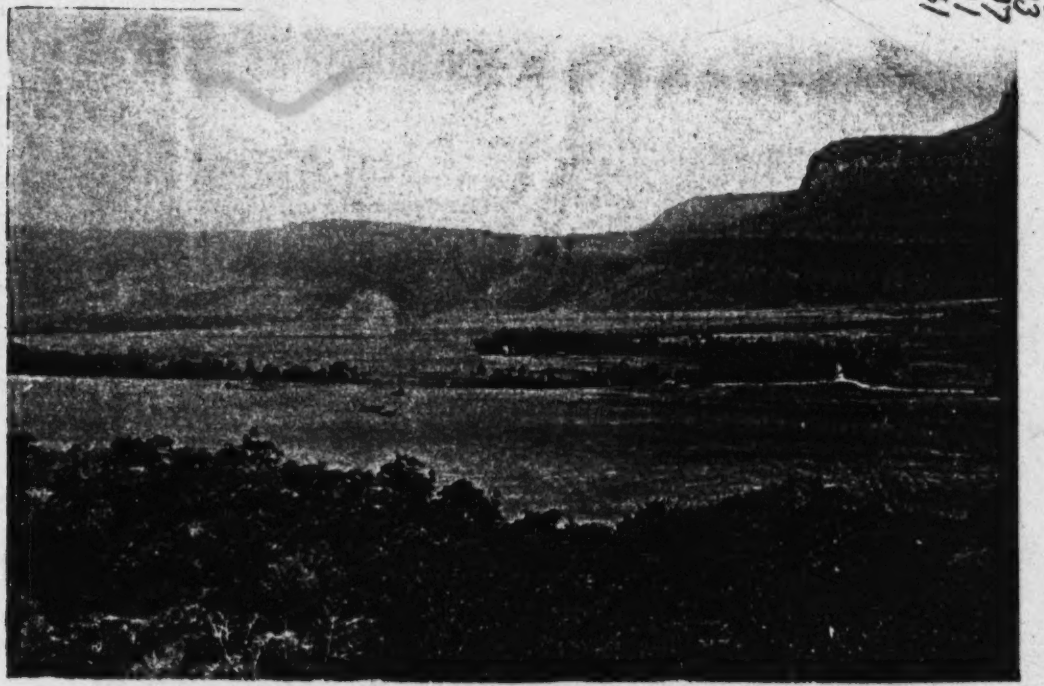


Fig. 1 – Typical Kamarakoto Settlement.

Uruyén seen from the east. In the foreground is the edge of a forest, in which farm clearings are made. Beyond the buildings of Uruyén is the Aichá River, flowing from left to right. The trees in the right background follow the Yuruán, the confluence of which with the Aichá (white with reflected light on the water), is seen to the right. In the left background is the upper end of the Kamarata Valley, with its various small sabanas, and in the right background above the sabanas are the two lower terraces of Auyán-tepúi.

133 the extreme lower course of the Aichá and part of the Akanán River around
103 the mouth of the Aichá, which is tributary to the Akanán. The third area is the lower valley of the Akanán, east of Auyán-tepúi, between Akanamuintá and the confluence of the Akanán with the Karao, and the fourth is formed by sabanas bordering the Karao near this confluence, northeast of Auyán-tepúi.

131 As the name implies, Kamarata ("the place Kamara") is traditionally
361 the home of the Kamarakotos ("the people of Kamara"). At present Uruyén,
[103 which is approximately in the middle of Kamarata, is the most western inhabited place in that valley. The upper, western end of the valley, at least
[169 as suitable for habitation, is now completely uninhabited. The Indians say that it was densely inhabited until recently and this is obviously true since
[264 abandoned farm patches can be seen there and traces of houses.[97] Many of the people are said to have died from fever or spirit-possession and the rest moved away. Now there are only four inhabited places considered as in Kamarata (one of which, Aleuiba, alewiiba, is outside the valley proper), and the center of population is in the lower Akanán valley, where approximately half of this "central group" of Kamarakotos live.

131 The inhabited area and the tribe itself are well-defined to the north and
137 to the east. No Kamarakotos live north of the Karao valley where there begins an enormous stretch of forest virtually unbroken by sabanas and therefore uninhabitable to these Indians. To the east no one lives more than half a day's travel east of the Akanán, where another lesser stretch of forest separates this region from the northern part of the Gran Sabana.

101 To the west and southwest, however, the boundaries of the tribe are ex-
61 tremely vague. Kamarata is here well-defined by mountains and forests, but
131 at no great distance beyond these in the valleys of the Caroni and its tributaries
139 there are sabanas which are inhabited by Indians indistinguishable from the Kamarakotos. The Indians themselves do not know how many of these people there are and are quite undecided as to whether they should be called Kamarakotos or not. Unlike what may be called the central group, in the Aichá, Akanán and Karao valleys, these Indians are not in constant touch with each other or with the nuclear group, and the authority over them claimed by the cacique is purely nominal as he does not really know who most of them are or
[184 where they live. In general they are thus more isolated and are less affected by the so-called civilizing influences centering within the nuclear group. They do frequently visit Kamarata to trade, visit, dance, and drink and are treated not quite as members of the family but still not as foreigners or outsiders. Their speech does not differ perceptibly from that of the central group. Some of them call themselves Kamarakotos, but generally they are called Arekumas by the central Kamarakotos. Except for the more attenuated influence on them of the recent expeditions, their culture is identical with that of the central
114 group. I have seen enough of them to verify these statements, but the present
101

97 [see footnote on p. 318, category 116. - Analyst]

5:Simpson N-5 (1939) 1940 SS16 Pemon SS16
Kamarakoto
119a

Fig. 5 – Kamarakoto Work Shelter.

Same building as Figs. 2-4. Photograph of northeast end (see Fig. 4A). The cane-press can be seen inside to the left. This building had not been used for some weeks and the ground would be free of vegetation if it were in current use.

GN2
●192
291

Fig. 10 — Kamarakoto Calabozo.
The northeast end and southeast side of Building E at Uruyén (see Map, Fig. 12). Although the thatch is in poor repair, the building is in use.

5:Simpson N-5 (1939) 1940 SS16 Pemon SS13
Kamarakoto
122

133
137
361

5:Simpson N-5 (1939) 1940 SS16 Pemon SS16
Kamarakoto

Fig. 12 — Kamarakoto Settlement.
Uruyén from the north. In the foreground is the edge of the Kumbá-tai, (on which the old air field was located). The moriche palms are growing on the swampy lower level between this and the Aichá River. Beyond the river, on a dry terrace, is the Uruyén-tai and Uruyén, the buildings of which can be dimly seen. The low, forest-covered hills beyond Uruyén are on igneous rock and against the horizon to the right is the east end of Enuarapaimá-tepui.

244
137

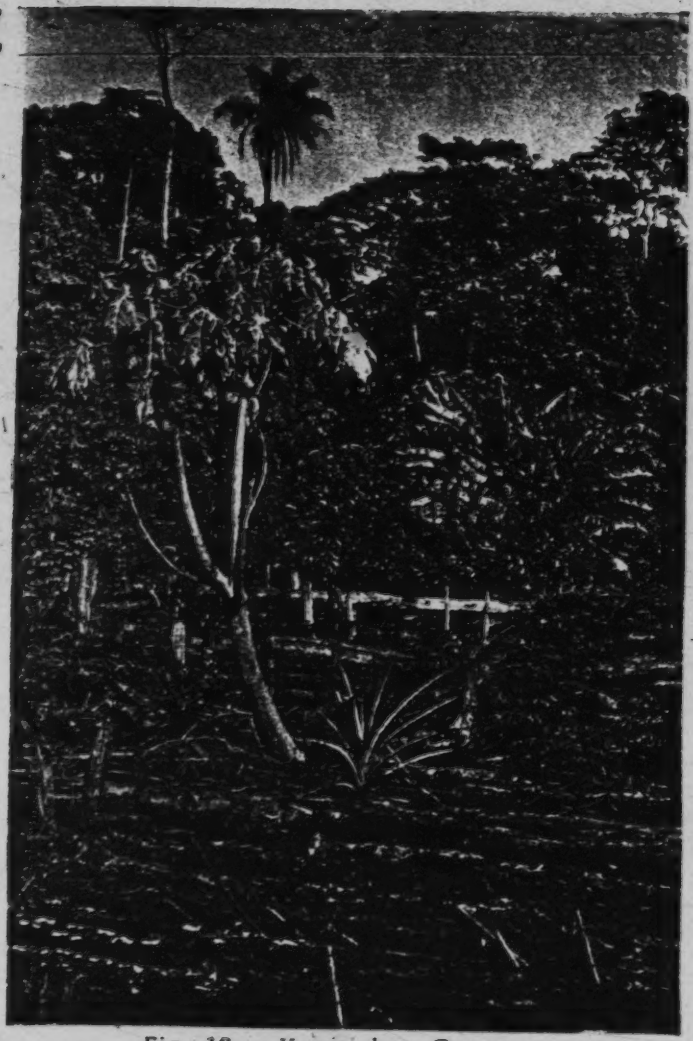


Fig. 13 — Kamarakoto Conuco.
One of the Urùyén conucos. The method of clearing by felling trees and burning is shown, as well as the haphazard planting.

24/ relatives, with inedible fruit, seem more probably to be indigenous to America.
177 In any case whenever bananas appeared they are now so ancient here that they
[173] are an integral and truly native feature in Indian life. The Kamarakotos have no idea that they are not native and no legends of a time when they were not known.[109]

24/ Sugar cane is also an old introduction, although probably not so old as
262 bananas. It is hardly an essential food, but is much enjoyed. Watermelons
177 are known by the Indians to have been introduced recently. They also say that squash and beans are recent, although these are native foods and are known to them by purely Carib names. Perhaps they meant only that the particular plants now growing there are from seeds brought in from elsewhere.

24/ Although corn (i.e. maize) is known and eaten, it is not plentiful and is
262 not really a staple. These are casave and not maize Indians.

The other root plants, Dioscorea, Xanthosoma, and Ipomea are abundant and may be ranked next to casave as staples. The true potato, Solanum, is not known, and this region is lower and warmer than any in which it was cultivated in pre-Columbian times.

24/ Although cacao has been supposed to be native to this general part of South America, none was observed and it appears to be unknown to the Kamarakotos. Other noteworthy omissions of plants that are cultivated by allied tribes, for instance in British Guiana, are the several citrus fruits and the avocado ("aguacate"), Persea. The former are introduced plants that have not yet penetrated this far; the latter is a native plant that, for some unknown reason, is rare in this region where it would, nevertheless, almost surely produce well.

● [132] Several useful wild plants, like species of Bromelia, Bixa, and Genipa, are sometimes planted but are not commonly cultivated forms.

Animal Foods.

23/ In distinction from plant foods, practically all animal foods are wild.
262 A solitary pig was once introduced into Kamarata (I do not know from where)
[177] but it is now dead and no others have been introduced. The only domestic ani-
[235] mals are dogs, which are not eaten, and chickens, which have recently been
[322] introduced and are not common. At Uruyén, when we were there, all the chickens were roosters — a subject for joking comment by the Indians, who have a keen (if somewhat robust) sense of humor. Some birds, especially small parrots or parakeets and moriche birds, are kept as pets but they are not bred in captivity and are not raised to eat so cannot be called domestic or food animals.

224 The favorite animal food is peccary, especially the larger species called
262 po.inga, and it is the principal goal of the hunter. The other peccary, pakira, is also prized as are the two kinds of deer, waikin and kutsari, the lapa, urana, the acure, akuri, and the tapir, maikuri (see Vocabulary for more exact identification of these animals).[1]

[1] [see footnote on p. 319, category 116 - Analyst]
[1] [see vocabulary on pp. 54-59, category 116 - Analyst]

411 prepared so that they fit perfectly and appear to be only a single tube unless
411 examined closely. Only the outer tube can be made from wood available to
439 the Kamarakotos and they therefore have to obtain the inner tube or the blow-
gun as a whole by trading with the Maquiritares (pabanoton), which makes a
blowgun an expensive and treasured object. They do sometimes obtain only
● [137] the inner tube by trade and construct the blowgun themselves. These tubes are
a major item of trade since they grow only in the Guinau and Maquiritare
country whence they are traded over an enormous area.

411 The blowgun as used sometimes consists only of the two fitted tubes, but
[829] generally a mouthpiece is attached. It is made of the hard shell of a palm nut
[322] (probably the awara, but I am not quite sure of this), cut in half, hollowed out,
[237] and pierced, so that it forms a hollow hemisphere with the breach opening of
the bore in the middle. It is fastened to the double tube with beeswax. Re-
lated tribes often have sights on the tube and the Kamarakotos told me that they
also sometimes use sights made of acure teeth, but I did not see any blowguns
with sights among them. In fact, from personal experiment, it seems to me at
least as easy, perhaps even easier, to aim the blowgun without a sight.[114]

Blowguns are commonly about twice as long as the height of the user.
A specimen in my collection is 272 1/2 cm. in length. It is very light and can
easily be held steady by the two hands near the mouth end despite its great
length. Single-tube and split-tube blowguns, such as occur on the Rio Negro
and upper Amazon, are unknown to the Kamarakotos.

[824] The darts (kumwa) (Fig. 17 C), usually about 38 - 40 cm. in length, are
made of the ribs of palm leaves, shaved until they are nearly circular in section,
2 to 3 mm. in diameter, and very sharply pointed at one end. Curare,
[278] kumawara, is applied to about 3 cm. at the pointed end, but the very tip is
rubbed clean so that a casual scratch does not inject any poison and the darts
are quite safe to handle.

278 Curare is not made by the Kamarakotos, probably because the necessary
411 plant does not grow in this region, and they do not know how it is made. They
[439] obtain it from the Maquiritares in the form of a solid, black or dark-brown,
pitch-like substance. They moisten the solid poison with water or, preferably,
casave-juice (kumachi)[115] and rub the tips of the darts in this. Since the poison
is so dark in color and the darts are light yellow, the presence or absence of
poison on them is obvious.

411 The poisoned darts, without further preparation, are carried in a quiver,
415 mōiyp, made of basketwork waterproofed with a heavy coating of beeswax,
237 moromba, and with a tight-fitted skin cover, see Fig. 67. The Kamarakotos
[439] sometimes make these and sometimes obtain them, of essentially the same form,
from the Maquiritares. A second basket, tsimuiᵍ, uncoated and without a top,
is attached to the quiver to carry kapok or ceiba, atsari, see Fig. 67, and jaw
of a caribe, or piranha, fish, tsipiraiᵍ, is attached to the top of quiver.

114, 115 [see footnotes on p. 320, category 116 - Analyst]

133
137
501

Fig. 72 -- Kamarakoto Canoe.

The canoe and paddle shown in Fig. 71 are here seen in use on the Aichá River at Uruyén.

526
857
291
137
133

Fig. 78 — Kamarakoto Boys Wrestling.